THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) The World Bank Study was based on bio-fuel production in USA where edible green crops like Soyabean, maize etc. were purportedly diverted for obtaining ethanol. Very little area is under bio-fuel production in India. Further, the Government as a policy encourages bio-fuel plantations only on wastelands. As such there has been no adverse impact of promoting bio-fuels on increase in food prices in India. The Government has also been encouraging research institutions such as Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to develop high yielding varieties and technologies for achieving higher production and productivity of all food crops. Besides, in pursuance of the decision taken in the meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Food Security Mission" has been launched from Rabi 2007-08. The aim of the Mission is to increase production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10 million tonnes, 8 million tonnes and 2 million tonnes respectively by the end of Eleventh Plan. In addition, the Government of India provides assistance for seeds and crop development programmes to enhance production and productivity under various schemes such as "Development and Strengthening of Infrastructure Facilities for Production and Distribution of Quality Seeds", "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM)", "Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)", "Macro-Management of Agriculture (MMA)", "Technology Mission on Cotton", "Technology Mission on Jute and Mesta", "National Horticulture Mission (NHM)" and "Technology Mission on Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States (TMNE)" etc.

National Policy on Millet

1704. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any 'National Policy on Millet' as India is the top producer of Millet in the world with 10.6 million tonnes per year and domestic consumer and exporter with value addition;

(b) if so, the strategies formulated to increase the production by fixing the Minimum Support Price and for exploring possibility of evolving decentralized multigrain and need based PDS suiting to the local condition; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) No, Sir However, National Agriculture Policy (July 2000) focused for special efforts to raise the production and productivity of crops to meet the increasing demand for food. Accordingly, to enhance the production and productivity of cereals including millet, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of "Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals (excluding Maize) Based Cropping System Areas (ICDP - Coarse Cereals)" under Macro Management Mode of Agriculture is in operation in the major coarse cereals growing States in the

country. Besides, frontline demonstrations of coarse cereals are also organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)/State Agriculture Universities on farmer's field to popularize the frontier technologies among farmers. Under this scheme, assistance is given to the farmers for distribution of seed minikits, distribution of certified seeds, micronutrients, gypsum, as well as transfer of technology through field demonstrations and training of farmers in farmer field schools.

The Government of India announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) every year for jowar, bajra and ragi. MSP has been increased for jowar and bajra from Rs.540/- per quintal in 2007-08 to Rs.840/- per quintal in 2009-10 and Rs.600/- per quintal in 2007-08 to Rs.915/- per quintal in 2009-10 for ragi, respectively.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution makes allocation of coarse grains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) as per the requests of the States/UTs for the same for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) categories. The coarse grains are allocated for AAY and BPL categories by submitting equal quantities of rice and/or wheat as requested by the States/UTs since allocation of food grains (rice and wheat) is already being made to these categories as per their entitlement *i.e.* @35 kgs. per family per month. However, for APL category, coarse grains are allocated based on requests received from State Governments in addition to their existing allocation of food grains where there is margin between the present allocation and the entitled maximum quantity of 35 kgs. per APL family per month.

Research and development in farming sector

1705. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the agriculture production is declining during recent years;

(b) if so, whether Government has taken any initiatives to promote research and development in the field of agriculture since there is threat for food security; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The production of rice, wheat, cereals and total foodgrains in the country has steadily increased during the last five years *i.e.*, 2004-05 to 2008-09 (4th advance estimates).

Government has taken several initiatives to promote research and development and adoption of improved technologies in the field of agriculture. Some of the major initiatives include enhancing crop productivity through development of superior varieties having high disease resistance, high yield and responding well for precision farming practices, evolving appropriate crop management practices and formulating efficient crop based cropping systems for sustainable food production,